



**THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA LECTURE ON**  
**THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019**

**“LANKAN BANKNOTES FROM 1785 TO MODERN”**  
**By Dr. Kavan Ratnatunga, Numismatist**

The 117<sup>th</sup> Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the **National Trust - Sri Lanka** will be held at the HNB Auditorium, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HNB Towers, 479 T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10 at 6.30p.m. on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Since the Dutch first introduced Paper Money for Ceylon in 1785 to modern currency issued by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, is a 235-year history of Banknotes which reflects changes in Economics, Politics and Technology. Early notes in Rix Dollars were redeemable in Copper. Private Banks such as The Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London & China - Ceylon Branch, Oriental Bank Corporation issued banknotes from 1844, till they crashed in early 1880 due to the Coffee Blight. Boer Prisoner of War notes were issued around 1900. The Government of Ceylon issued notes with signatures of the Commissioner of Currency from 1885 to 1949. The Central Bank issued notes under the signature of the Minister of Finance and its Governor from 1951 to present. They are just legal tender with no intrinsic value. The language on the notes changed from Dutch to English to Sinhala with varying amount of other languages. Only the denomination has always been given in three languages. Watermarks were introduced around the 1840s and are hardly documented. Ultraviolet printing was introduced in 1970 and their beauty remains unseen by the public who handle the Banknotes.



Dr. Kavan Ratnatunga studied at Royal College, Colombo. He got a First Class BSc Honours Degree in Physics in 1976 from the University of Ceylon, Colombo. He qualified as an astrophysicist, with a 1983 PhD from Australian National University, specializing in the automated statistical analysis of astronomical data and digital images. His 25-year career included research at Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Space Telescope Science Institute and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Highlights of over 50 publications in refereed Journals included the First in-situ sample of Field Halo K-giants in Galactic Halo (1983), and the First Quad Gravitational Lens discovered with NASA Hubble Space Telescope (1995).

He retired back to Lanka in 2005. His current interest includes increasing the information on Lanka on the Internet via his domain [lakdiva.org](http://lakdiva.org) Archaeology with a special interest in Numismatics. At the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, he did a Diploma in Museology.

He is Vice President of the Sri Lanka Numismatic Society, and the Archaeological Society of Sri Lanka. He writes Freelance to the Sunday Times of Sri Lanka. He did visiting Lecturers on Astronomy at the University of Moratuwa at Katubedda, and was a frequent guest on National Television Rupavahini program Yatharoopa. He gives Guest Lectures on Astronomy, Numismatics, and the Internet. He is a Trustee of the National Trust of Sri Lanka.

**The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures will be **STRICTLY CONFINED TO MEMBERS ONLY** due to the present security situation. The HNB Sustainability Foundation is the principal sponsor of the events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka.**

**Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel 2682730 / 0778081214 at the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, 407, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7.**